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ABSTRACT

It is difficult to obtain reliable data on the nature of the audience for international broadcast programs in Asia (e.g., those beamed by the Voice of America or Radio Japan). However, analysis of listener mail and some survey research have provided a fairly clear profile of the audience: young (ages 15-34), well educated, urban, male (but with a fair proportion of female students), fairly affluent, often in "decision-making" or high-prestige positions or occupations. Significant deviations from this profile may appear when a given international station has been clearly audible over the predominant domestic broadcast band (whether short wave or medium wave). Far less is known about how often, to what, and why people listen to international services, and even less about how much they comprehend or accept of what they hear. The research methods used to gather data on these audiences have included solicitation of mail by means of contests and "give-aways," requests for comments on programs, and questionnaires. Listener panels are also used. More research is needed to get clear pictures of these audiences and the effects of the broadcasts on them. (JK)

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INTERNATIONAL RADIO BROADCASTING:

WHO LISTENS?*

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Professor

EM 008 941

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Preface

In this paper, I have sought to examine a rather broad field--research in international broadcasting--from what might appear to be an overly narrow perspective: research in international broadcasting as it applies to broadcasts intended for listeners in Asia. I would not deny that I have done this in part from sheer expediency and convenience, in that my most recent research project in international broadcasting (April-May, 1970) focused on Asia. What I discovered in the course of my research has led me to feel that the Asia "situation" in international broadcasting is quite typical of the African "situation" (with which I have also had first-hand contact), and, quite probably, typical of the Near Eastern and Latin American "situations," as well. In other words, much of what you read in this paper should be quite applicable to a substantial portion of the world, and, at times, the entire world. It is a question of balance: survey research is simpler to undertake in Western Europe, the United States, and Japan than it is in other parts of the world, where it may be either difficult (lack of trained research personnel; presence of "scattered" population, which makes survey research too costly) or impossible (uncooperative national governments). This in turn means that analysis of listener mail or analysis by "expert" panel is likely to be more often used and more heavily relied upon in these nations. It does not mean that survey research has no place in Asia, and, in fact, I have cited several studies conducted in Asia which were based on very standard research designs.

The Audience in Theory

In assessing the potential effectiveness of any international broadcasting operation seeking to reach audiences in Asia, it would seem prudent to first examine how such assessments might be made irrespective of the geographic area to be reached, then see how conditions in Asia may create special circumstances to which any international broadcaster must adapt if he is to enjoy any degree of success there. The two basic elements in the assessment are physical and psychological.

Physical: The three most essential aspects of this element are the presence on the listener's side of radio sets equipped to receive the frequencies on which one intends to broadcast, and on the broadcaster's side of transmitting equipment powerful enough to broadcast receiving signals to the area in question, as well as languages that listeners in the area will understand. The first two aspects are relative: two listeners may own sets capable of receiving the vast majority of shortwave bands, but one may own a thirty-dollar transistor which can detect only the most powerful shortwave signals, while the other may own a three hundred dollar set which will pick up the vast majority of shortwave signals beamed to the area. Likewise, a signal may in theory be powerful enough to reach the area, but it may in practice be blotted out by an even more powerful station broadcasting within the area, by jamming (the transmission of deliberate electronic interference with an incoming broadcast signal) or through the effects of random atmospheric interference.

These aspects, as they apply specifically to Asia, reveal several

potential problems. First, radio set penetration in Asia is not particularly high; Japan has a ratio of approximately one radio set for every four persons, while Hong Kong, Singapore, the Republic of China (Taiwan), South Korea and Thailand have approximately one radio set for every six to twelve persons, but other Asian nations have ratios ranging from one set for every twenty persons (Malaysia, South Vietnam, North Vietnam) to one set for every one hundred persons (Pakistan).[1] Second, many of the sets that do exist are capable of receiving medium wave signals only, while sets equipped to receive shortwave are frequently incapable of detecting all but the strongest signals. Furthermore, certain Asian nations (Communist China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, Ceylon) make some use of wired broadcasting systems, which substantially reduce listener choice and which rarely offer foreign broadcasting services (Hong Kong, Malaysia and Singapore, however, all rebroadcast some BBC material).

Third, certain governments in Asia have at times made it difficult for their citizens to listen to foreign broadcasts,either by use of

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[1]These figures are taken largely from the 1970 World Radio-TV Handbook (Ed., J. M. Frost, available from World Radio-TV Handbook, Soliljevej 44, 2650 Hvidovre, Denmark), and, since they are often based on incomplete governmental data, may be faulty, but should not be grossly in error. However, the figures undoubtedly fail to reflect the sometimes substantial number of undeclared (for the purposes of an annual listener fee) sets. An Indian colleague of the author, Prof. V. M. Mishra, discovered in the course of a 1968 research project in the "slums" of New Delhi that that number of black market radio sets far exceeded the official governmental set figures for those districts. The same may also be true of Communist China, where, according to several Hong Kong "China watchers" interviewed by the author in April, 1970, there may be substantial numbers of undeclared sets built with radio parts "liberated" in the course of the Cultural Revolution in 1967.

jamming (Communist China, North Korea, North Vietnam, and perhaps the Republic of China, India, and Pakistan) or by legal measures. Although nowhere in Asia are there express laws forbidding people to listen to foreign broadcasts, there are several Asian countries (again, Communist China, North Korea, North Vietnam, as well as the Republic of China and, in the mid-1960's, Indonesia) where such listening may be used as evidence of anti-governmental activities if the listener repeats to others the information he has received.[2]

Fourth, the growth of domestic radio services in most Asian countries over the past fifteen years has been considerable, so that most persons owning sets have the choice of a number of domestic stations. This has in turn meant not only increased programing competition for foreign stations seeking to reach these audiences; it has also meant less frequency space through which to do so. A traveller in most parts of Asia today will find the medium wave frequency spectrum from 80 to 90 per cent "full" in any given city, and rural areas in many nations are nearly as well served.

If, therefore, an international broadcaster is seeking to reach a large, heterogeneous audience in most Asian countries, he faces a difficult task. Without access to a medium wave frequency and a transmitting system of considerable power, the task is nearly impossible (except for Pakistan, Indonesia and India, which rely heavily on

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[2]However, there are cases of listeners in Communist China being caught in the act of listening to foreign broadcasts and being "sentenced" to undergo "thought reform"; here, apparently, the act of listening in itself was judged sufficient reason for quasi-legal action. See "Hear No Evil," China News Service (Hong Kong) Report No. 301, December 18, 1969.

shortwave for domestic broadcasting; several other Asian nations also make use of shortwave for this purpose). Even with such access, he faces the problem of which languages to employ, since Asia has no lingua franca; Mandarin, Cantonese, English and, to an increasing extent, Japanese, come closest, and all major international broadcasters in the area use these, but there are also substantial audiences to be served in Indonesian, Korean, Vietnamese, Hindi, Urdu and a host of other languages and dialects. The expense and overall difficulty of hiring and supervising large staffs for each of these services, as well as the lack of sufficient frequencies for separate day-long services in each, mean that choices must be made and priorities established. These will usually be dictated by national (or, in the case of religious stations, denominational) policy, but can also be dictated by sheer lack of availability of staff members capable of handling certain languages.

Psychological: Assuming an international broadcaster has understood and attempted to fulfill all of the necessary physical conditions for reaching audiences in a given geographical area, he must then prepare his material in such a way that his audiences will be willing to listen to it. This has become increasingly difficult in every part of the world because of the increased availability of domestic radio services, television services, newspapers, magazines, books and various leisure time activities. Most of these are easier to "use" than are the broadcast services of foreign countries, particularly when the

latter are available through shortwave only and/or are on the air for only brief periods daily in most languages. In order to overcome this problem, it is usually necessary to analyze a given area of country in terms of the audiences that might potentially be reached because they own sets that can receive one's broadcasts and because they understand the languages one employs, then examine these audiences in terms of what they are not likely to be able to receive or acquire through their own domestic media. Once this has been done, one's own national or organizational priorities come into play, and it becomes a question of deciding how to most effectively reach those particular audiences with specific messages which are in turn based on one's own priorities.

Following a highly detailed comparative study of "image fluctuations" on the part of citizens in foreign nations, Deutsch and Merritt[3] concluded that fully 40 per cent of any population simply does not changes its mind with respect to any given international event, and that the majority of the remaining 60 per cent will change its mind only in the case of a spectacular event (e.g. the Russian intervention in Hungary in 1956) or an unusual combination of lesser events; furthermore, most of those whose minds change sooner or later lapse into the opinions they had held prior to the event. Less than 15 per cent of any population appear to be susceptible to change under "normal" circumstances, i.e., without spectacular or highly unusual combinations of events. This places a further limitation on the potential effective-

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[3] Karl W. Deutsch and Richard L. Merritt, "Effects of Events on International Images." Chapter 5 of Kelman, Herbert C. (ed.), International Behavior. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965.

ness of international broadcasting--at least, to the extent that one agrees with the conclusions reached by Deutsch and Merritt.

Several authors[4] have suggested that certain specific categories of the general population fit into this 15 per cent. They include students, teachers, government officials, and, to a lesser extent, members of such specialized occupations as the officer class of the military, business, law, journalism and medicine. Most of these are well educated, inquisitive, fairly prosperous, and regard themselves and/or are regarded by others as "opinion leaders." Many have travelled internationally or maintain contact with people and organizations in foreign countries. If such people are "important" in terms of national or denominational priorities, then the fact that they form a minority within the total national population does not really matter to an international broadcaster. If they also own and use radio sets frequently, and if those sets are also equipped to receive foreign broadcasts, then the chances of reaching them are extremely favorable.

Their reasons for listening to foreign broadcasts will vary, but there appear to be several specific purposes they hope to achieve: 1) to better understand a foreign nation or ideology in which one is interested; 2) to better understand an "enemy" so as to be able to oppose him more successfully; 3) to acquire or improve a specific

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[4]See Deutsch and Merritt, op. cit.; Irving L. Janis and M. Brewster Smith, "Effects of Education and Persuasion on National and International Images." Chapter 6 of Kelman, op. cit.; Browne, Donald R., "The Limits of the Limitless Medium--International Broadcasting," Journalism Quarterly, Vol. 42, No. 1 (Winter, 1965), 82-86.

language skill; 4) to retain ties with the"mother country" or "second homeland"; 5) to keep abreast of ideological, political or cultural developments of a certain nation or "way of life" (e.g. Communism, Christianity) so as to be able to better act as a propagandist on behalf of that nation or ideology; 6) to seek entertainment unavailable through domestic media (e.g. music "request" shows; recent jazz or "rock" recordings). Several of these purposes could be advanced to varying degrees by the same listener, although many listeners would advance only one or two. Certain purposes would be antithetical to the goals of certain international broadcasters (e.g., number 2), while others would be minimally productive in and of themselves (e.g., number 6).

With an understanding of these purposes, an international broadcaster is in a position to consider his possible lines of approach to the audiences he both desires and is able to reach. In the case of several audiences--those who have lived in his country for some period of time, those whose business it is to be thoroughly familiar with his country--problems of language (word choice, rate, etc.) are likely to be minimal; problems of psychological resistance may also be smaller than is this case for other potential audiences. There are probably many other audiences that an international broadcaster desires to reach, however, and for these the problems of language and psychological resistance are likely to be greater. The latter may very well rise with increased involvement or impact on the part of one nation in/on another nation's affairs (political, economic, military). In such

situations, this increased involvement may create a greater interest on the part of a greater number of listeners in the activities of the other nation, but it may also generate greater suspicion and may even make available a greater diversity of sources (e.g. businessmen and armed services personnel from that country, greater attention to the affairs of the other country from the "domestic" media) against which to compare information coming directly from that country.

The nature of psychological resistance to messages coming from abroad has been carefully examined by Janis and Smith.[5] Several of their conclusions apply with particular force to international broadcasting, perhaps none more than the notion that, in order to gain the initial confidence of the recipient of one's message, it is necessary to concentrate on areas where the recipient's education and social situation (peer group influence) have not pre-conditioned him to reject the message out of hand. Janis and Smith call these areas "side issues." Broadcasting is particularly well suited as a vehicle for the conveyance of side issues because it is used as a medium for both information and entertainment in virtually every country in the world; therefore, an international broadcaster can project side issues in the form of entertainment (popular music, "listeners' mailbag" programs) or "soft" information (brief features on cultural and social developments, documentaries), include small quantities of information on more difficult issues (or make promotional announcements as to when such information can be received), and still operate a perfectly "normal" broadcasting service.

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[5] Janis and Smith, op. cit. Many of their conclusions are based almost

Cultural and economic leadership or importance lend themselves very easily and naturally to the development of "side issues." Each is often of great interest to the international radio audience; neither is terribly threatening (although Radio Peking has at times "warned" Asian nations about Japan's rising economic hegemony in Asia). In fact, there may be a "reverse problem" where culture is concerned, since most Asian nations have very rich and ancient culture heritages, and are sometimes disdainful of foreign (including other Asian) cultures. Military and political prominence are somewhat "touchier", since either one can easily evoke distrust or fear on the part of the listener. Asia has experienced three wars of major proportions in the past thirty years, and most Asian nations have been under foreign control or occupation during some part of the Twentieth Century, which has in turn often led to economic exploitation. While a major power such as the United States cannot very well avoid discussing its military or political presence in Asia (since the absence of such material would itself be cause for suspicion), it must seek to alleviate such fears as may be aroused by placing these matters in perspective--unless it deliberately intends to intimidate its listeners.

In the final analysis, much will depend on which specific audiences the broadcaster wishes to reach. To borrow from the hypothetical example just cited, the United States might very well decide that intimidation should be practical in VOA broadcasts to Asia, but it is

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solely on studies of American recipients of messages, and must therefore be taken with some degree of caution.

likely that the VOA audiences attending to these messages would be limited to those who wish to propagandize on America's behalf and those whose job it is to "keep track of the opposition." If the VOA were to engage in this practice often, this could very well have the effect of discouraging more "neutral" listeners from listening to the station at all, which might not be disastrous in the short run, but surely would be a major problem if the VOA were ever to wish to rejoin the neutral listener in the future.

The Audience in Actuality

It was stated above that the potential audience for international broadcasting in Asia appears to be relatively small, but that certain classifications of listeners should in theory be found throughout the hemisphere: students (particularly high school and college), teachers, governmental officials, journalists, businessmen, military officers, lawyers and doctors. Furthermore, these listeners should be predominantly male, relatively young, fairly well-to-do, and urban (as opposed to rural).

Because Asia is both physically vast and fractionated into many nations, and because the majority of these nations lack the necessary expertise to carry out such work, there has never been a comprehensive survey of the Asian audience for international broadcasting. Instead, there have been a modest number of small scale surveys commissioned by different broadcasters, often asking different questions, and sometimes excluding totally certain elements of the population (e.g., rural

or under 18 years of age). Most of the international broadcasting organizations with "major" audiences in Asia (Radio Peking, The Voice of Free China--Taiwan, Radio Moscow, Radio Australia, The Voice of America, BBC, and Far East Broadcasting Company--a religious broadcasting operation) also keep track of mail received from listeners, and prepare yearly reports on it. Most of these organizations also hold contests periodically, in which listeners are encouraged to identify themselves (age, sex, occupation, educational level, favorite programs) in return for a chance at winning everything from packets of stamps to elaborate radio sets to trips to another country. None of this material forms a very certain base from which to draw a detailed picture of the audience, but, such as it is, it generally confirms the theoretical picture already provided. What it does not provide, as will be quite evident, is any substantial indication of why listeners listen, of why they choose certain programs and not others, and of what they understand and accept in the broadcasts they hear.

Survey Research--In the course of random sample survey work done in the late 1940's and in the 1950's by VOA, BBC and other organizations, it became apparent that, under anything like normal circumstances (absence of a major international occurrence, access to reasonably complete coverage of international affairs by domestic media), only a small portion of the population of a given country listened to international radio broadcasts. Most of these surveys were conducted in Western Europe, since most nations there had organizations equipped to

undertake survey research.[6] They might thus have not reflected the true situation with regard to the audience for international broadcasting in Asia, but at this time there were only one or two Asian nations with their own survey research firms. By the 1960's, more of these firms had come into existence, but by this time the major international broadcasters were somewhat disillusioned as to how much they could learn through survey research, and therefore commissioned little of it. Most of the major studies have been undertaken by or for the Japanese Broadcasting Corporation (NHK), the Voice of America, and the BBC.[7]

A random sample poll conducted in Japan by the Japanese Broadcasting Corporation in 1968 (N=1007) revealed that only about 8 per cent of the sample population claimed to listen at all to any given foreign radio station, and less than 2 per cent listened as often as once a month. However, men were anywhere from twice to ten times as likely to listen as were women (it depended on which specific service was cited; about ten times more Japanese males claimed to listen to Radio Peking than did Japanese females, while the ratio was closer to two to one for the VOA); farmers listened less than once a month, if

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[6]International broadcasters could conduct their own research with their own employees, of course, but this would most often have the effect of either prejudicing the respondents' answers or bordering on what the host country might well call espionage.

[7]Radio Australia attempted a random sample study in the 1950's, although none of the current staff seems to know anything about it. Radio Moscow officials hinted to the author that they had commissioned a random sample survey in India. The Far East Broadcasting Company intends to conduct one in Asia in 1971.

they listened at all; those above 50 years of age listened almost as little as did farmers (although the BBC managed to attract one "daily" listener in this age bracket).[8]

Another random sample survey, this one conducted among adults (18+) in Manila, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore and Seoul for the Voice of America in 1965, revealed that no more than 30 per cent of any of the four sample populations reported listening to any foreign station at least once a month, and the figure for Singapore in this respect was 10 per cent. Roughly 22 per cent of the Seoul and Manila sample populations claimed to listen to the Voice of America at least once a week, but VOA is available on medium wave in both cities. The BBC, available through wired radio in Kuala Lumpur, was listened to once a week or more by 9 per cent of the sample population there. VOA also realized one other benefit from its medium wave availability in Manila and Seoul: its audience was made up of men and women in equal proportions.[9]

Another sample survey, this one conducted among South Vietnamese teachers in 1960 by USIS Saigon, showed that approximately 45 per cent of the sample population (N=200) listened at least once a month to shortwave broadcasts from other countries. Roughly 30 per cent

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[8] NHK, The Mexican Olympics. (in Japanese) Tokyo, Japan: NHK, 1968, p. 126.

[9] U.S. Information Agency, The Radio Audience in Four Far Eastern Cities, 1965. Washington: USIA, Research Report R-199-65, December, 1965.

claimed to listen to the BBC, 18 per cent to VOA, no more than 2 per cent to any other foreign station.[10]

Yet another VOA sample survey conducted in South Vietnam dealt with uses made of mass media by university students in Saigon. This study, conducted in May, 1966 (N=504), revealed, among other things, that foreign radio is the chief source of information on world affairs: 58 per cent of the students said they received a "great deal" of their information on world affairs from foreign radio, another 27 per cent claimed a "moderate amount." This combined total of 83 per cent compares more than favorably with newspapers (25 per cent + 57 per cent = 82 per cent) and local radio (16 per cent + 62 per cent = 78 per cent). Sixty-eight per cent of the students also claimed to listen to VOA at least once a week, compared with 65 per cent for the BBC, 23 per cent for Radio Australia, 6 per cent for Radio Japan, 3 per cent for Radio Hanoi and Radio Peking. However, the BBC was rated as most accurate by 76 per cent of the students who listened to foreign stations, as contrasted with 11 per cent for the VOA.[11]

Finally, the BBC, which has commissioned small-scale random sample surveys in a number of European, African, Middle Eastern, and Latin American countries in recent years, conducted such surveys in India and in Thailand in 1968. The Indian survey, carried out by the Indian Institute of Public Opinion among the adult population of 35

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[10] USIS Saigon, "Media Survey of Teachers." Saigon: U.S. Information Service, July, 1960.

[11] U.S. Information Agency, Office of Policy and Research, Use of Mass Media by University Students in Saigon. Research Report R-128-66, December, 1966. Students were not asked why they felt BBC

Indian cities, revealed that 12 per cent of those interviewed claimed to be "regular" listeners to the BBC, including 3 per cent who claimed to listen "daily" or "nearly every day."[12]

Listener Mail--Analysis of listener mail forms the other mainstay in audience research, but the nature of the mail itself varies: most is solicited by stations (in the form of contests, musical request programs, programs on which listeners' questions are answered, verification of reception reports by listeners), a small amount is not. At the least, listener mail will give a station some idea of where its signal can be received, at least at a given point in time. It will also be possible in most cases to determine the sex of the listener. Beyond these two matters things are pretty much up to chance, although contest entries must generally contain information on the listener's occupation, some indication of the program or programs where he or she heard the contest announcement, and perhaps something about signal quality. Various formulae have been proposed for the projection of listener mail as an index of total audience,[13] but when mail may

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to be so accurate, but the Office of Policy and Research interpreted the basic results to indicate that Great Britain, because it was not directly involved in the Indochina War, would have more credibility than would VOA.

[12] BBC Handbook, 1969. London: BBC, 1969, p. 111.

[13] Trans-World Radio, in an application for a shortwave relay station on Guam now pending before the FCC, has used a formula of "two hundred listeners for every letter," and has claimed that Voice of America officials have used this projection. In various conversations with VOA officials over the past thirteen years, the author has always found them leery of citing "projection formulae," but, given the demands of the U.S. Congress for precise measurements of VOA effectiveness, it is quite possible that VOA or USIA officials have suggested a formula. In any case, nothing in the research literature indicates how such a projection can be legitimately arrived at.

itself be subject to many barriers--censorship, cost of stationery and postage,[14] illiteracy--this would appear to be a dubious means of determining audience size.

Listener mail can be useful, however, in determining year-to-year trends and in comparing the mail various stations receive from various countries. For example, should Radio Australia mail from listeners in India climb sharply in a year when the BBC experienced a sharp drop in listener mail from India, and should there be no obvious explanation for this phenomenon (dropping or adding of language services, increased or decreased broadcast time, a spectacular favorable or unfavorable event), this could lead to some soul-searching on the part of the BBC; it could also cause Radio Australia to reassess its priorities.

Because it is readily available and relatively simple to categorize, most international broadcasting organizations subject listener mail to at least rudimentary analysis. Radio Japan, Radio Australia, the Voice of America, the Far East Broadcasting Company, and the Voice of Free China have released figures on it. The only respect in which these published figures may be compared is in terms of total volume of mail from the Asian hemisphere (here understood as reaching from Pakistan on the west to Japan on the east, and including the Pacific

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[14] Radio Australia has reported a considerable increase in listener mail over the past few years, a fact it attributes in part to its over-the-air promotion of "local" addresses in several Asian countries to which listeners may send mail for forwarding to Radio Australia; such mail will of course be sent at domestic postal rates, which in most Asian countries are far lower than are international rates (particularly for air mail).

region).[15]

o Australia y 68 - June 69)	Radio Japan (Jan-Dec 68)	VOFA July 67-June 68)	VOA (Jan-Dec 68)	FEBC (Jan-Dec 68)
rox. 109,600 of 132,000	approx. 13,800 out of 32,000	approx. 10,050 out of 11,330	apr. 23,000 out of 136,000	apr. 31,000 out of 32,000

Where statistics are available on listener mail from individual countries, they explain much of the imbalance in the gross figures cited above. For example, Radio Australia received nearly 70,000 letters from Indonesia for its twelve-month period, while the comparable figures for Radio Japan were nearly 5,000 and for VOFC just over 1,100. Radio Australia broadcasts in Indonesian for nine hours a day, Japan for one, VOFC for one. Part of this mail comes from Chinese-speaking listeners (about 80 per cent of VOFC's Indonesian mail and about 22 per cent of Radio Australia's comes from Chinese languages per day, Radio Australia 3½, and Radio Japan 3½. Radio Australia further benefits from the fact that its transmitters are in close geographical proximity to Indonesia. But perhaps the chief reason for Radio Australia's comparative success in attracting listeners in Indonesia is its unique policy of providing large amounts of popular music (Western, Chinese, Indonesian) and encouraging listeners to write to the station with their musical requests. Thus it is not surprising to learn that the average age of Radio Australia's letter-writing audience (when it can be discerned) is between 18 and 21. It would therefore appear that there is a comparatively sizeable audience in Indonesia for international broadcasts, but that it would be advisable to engage in a particular kind of programing, and in fairly large amounts, at that,

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[15] These figures are drawn largely from internal reports prepared by the broadcasting organizations for their own use, but made available to the author for his research project.

in order to attract this audience to one's own station. This in turn assumes that one wishes to attract such an audience.

These listener mail figures show only that Radio Australia is far more successful than are Radio Japan or VOFC in attracting mail-writing listeners; they do not tell us much about what gets listened to or what is liked, much less why. These answers emerge only through the raising of specific questions with listeners in the course of contests, or through a painstaking (and often fruitless) random examination of listener mail in general. Radio Australia attempted the latter with respect to a modest sampling (2,707 letters and cards) of mail received from Indonesia in 1965. More than half of this mail was requests for either popular music or for the station's program schedule. Only 137 of the letters and cards contained clues or statements as to the writer's occupation or age. Almost none of it dealt with program preferences.[16]

Contests and other forms of solicitation (e.g., "give-aways") are a far more fruitful means of gathering specific information on listener characteristics and preferences. A basic condition of any

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[16]Radio Australia, Notes on Radio Australia Mail Analysis--A Pilot Study. Melbourne: Radio Australia, July, 1965. A subsequent Radio Australia analysis of listener mail in Japanese was somewhat more fruitful, in that approximately 15 per cent of the letters for 1967-1969 contained statements regarding age; of these, 80 to 90 per cent were from writers in their teens. See Radio Australia, Statistics on Japanese Listeners' Mail. 1st January, 1967--31st December, 1969. Melbourne: Radio Australia, 1970. Radio Japan has also conducted such analyses, but the published results are far less detailed, stating only that there had been a general increase in listener mail in 1969, and that Radio Japan's Asia News. Towards Progress and Harmony (about Expo '70), Let's Learn Japanese and Trade and Industries were the programs most often singled out for specific mention by listeners who specified their program preferences. See NHK Handbook, 1970. Tokyo: NHK, 1970, p. 100.

"give-away" or contest is that listeners writing to the station provide name, age, sex and occupation. If the contest features exceptional prizes (free trips abroad, expensive radio sets), more information may be demanded: how often one listens, what one's favorite programs are and why, perhaps a replication of information furnished by the station through its programs. The listener profile that emerges from solicited mail differs somewhat from the profile provided by the few random sample studies that have been conducted in Asia, but the differences are at least in part the result of additional detail: the profile remains predominantly young, but can now be seen to consist of young businessmen, military officers, government officials, teachers, etc., as well as of young students.

A fairly typical contest mail study was conducted by the VOA in conjunction with the 6th Anniversary (1967) of the VOA Breakfast Show (a two-hour mixture in English or music, news, and features). The prizes offered were some long-playing records; the contest was announce about two dozen times. Over 3,000 letters came in as a result of this contest. The VOA analyzed the first 2,250 letters received, and found that 1,230 of them came from South Asia (India, Pakistan, Burman, Ceylon). The South Asian mail was subjected to further analysis. Occupational breakdown revealed that about 34 per cent of this sub-sample was made up of students, about 8 per cent of teachers, another 8 per cent of engineers, another 8 per cent of businessmen. White-collar workers at the secretarial-stenographer level accounted for 9 per cent of the total, as did white-collar workers at the civil servant-office manager level. A number of letters contained random comments on the Breakfast Show program itself; while these comments were not subjected

to formal analysis, an informal analysis reveals that negative comments centered around quality of reception (weak signal, too much interference from other sources) and length of newscasts (a few requested more news, several requested less or even none at all), while positive comments stressed appreciation of the informality of the Breakfast Show, which, in the view of many listeners, made it highly entertaining as well as informative.[18]

Another form of contest calls upon the listener to write an essay concerning a subject of importance to the nation from which a given international station broadcasts; this is often a subject which has in fact been extensively featured by the station. Radio Moscow has held several contests of this nature in recent years; in 1970, the subject of the essay was "What Lenin Means to Me." The centenary of Lenin's birth was being observed in 1970, and Radio Moscow carried many special feature programs about Lenin during late 1969 and early 1970. The prize in this case was a trip to the USSR, which should have drawn many entries; although Radio Moscow staff members would not reveal precise numbers to the author, they did state that they analyzed these essays for indications of material that listeners might have gleaned from the broadcasts. Radio Japan held a similar contest, with a similar prize, in connection with Expo '70. This resulted in over 1,700 entries, chiefly from listeners in the United States (324), Indonesia (248), Brazil (211--most in Japanese), Taiwan (153), and India (151).

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[18] U.S. Information Agency. Memorandum: The Breakfast Show Audience. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Information Agency, IBS/PW, July 7, 1967.

Over one-third of the essays were written in English, another one-sixth in Japanese (English and Japanese are the principal languages employed by Radio Japan).[19]

All international broadcast services, in addition to soliciting mail by means of contests and "give-aways," also encourage listeners to write by means of spot announcements in which the station simply asks for comment on its programs, reception conditions, etc., with no particular inducement added. Radio Japan has introduced a variation on this in the form of a rather elaborate questionnaire attached to Radio Japan News, a monthly newsletter sent out in nine languages and five editions to the vast majority of listeners who have corresponded with Radio Japan during the past year. The questionnaire, which is generally sent once each year, asks for information on age, sex, occupation, preferred listening hours and frequencies, and, less regularly, make, power and band reception capability of the listener's set. Rate of return on the questionnaires runs from 10 to 20 per cent, and almost 90 per cent on those responding are men. This audience is predominantly young (approximately two-thirds are in their thirties or younger), predominantly Asian (roughly 40 per cent, with another 8 per cent from Oceania, 20 per cent from Europe, nearly 15 per cent from North America), but also made up of a rather well-balance mixture of students (31.5 per cent in the June, 1969 survey), white-collar workers (16 per cent), merchants and tradesmen (13 per cent),

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[19] NHK, Radio Japan News, May, 1970, p. 1.

scientists and technicians (10 per cent), educators (4.3 per cent) and farmers (4.2 per cent).[20]

Radio Australia has conducted similar surveys by means of questionnaires distributed with a given issue of the station's Programme Guide, but not since 1959. Surveys taken at this time confirm most of what has been revealed through other surveys already cited: the predominance of male listeners (about 90 per cent for the English- and Chinese-language broadcasts, about 80 per cent for the Indonesian) of less than thirty years of age (about 60 per cent for English, 93 per cent for Chinese, 85 per cent for Indonesian). Between 40 and 45 per cent of each sample group claimed that music was their "top preference" in Radio Australia programing, while news broadcasts were listed as "top preference" by about 25 per cent of the Chinese and Indonesian samples, and by over 31 per cent of the English sample. No negative comments were solicited in the questionnaire, nor were listeners asked why they ranked their preferences asthey did (the same is true of the annual Radio Japan questionnaires).[21]

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[20] NHK International Department (Radio Japan), Radio Nippon No Hoso Ni Kansuru Chosa Kei (Summary of Radio Japan Broadcasting Survey). Tokyo: NHK, September, 1969, and March, 1970.

[21] Radio Australia, Listener Survey (Chinese, English, and Indonesian). Melbourne: Radio Australia, 1959. In contrast with most other detailed surveys, listeners were not asked to indicate occupation. Sample sizes for the three language services were English--1,511, Chinese--3,316, Indonesian-3,002. There was no indication of how many questionnaires were sent out initially.

Listener Panels--Most of the data solicited through the aforementioned sources deals with "listener profile" and with overall program preferences. Far less has been attempted in the area of audience reactions to individual programs or series. This type of analysis is difficult to conduct through the usual random sample or questionnaire methods, since it demands a good deal of thought on the part of the listener, and since it would probably result in extremely small or even non-existent sub-samples for certain of the more specialized programs offered by most international broadcasters. Therefore most international stations which have sought to discover more precisely what their audiences think about certain programs and why have turned to the "listener panel" concept.

There are two basic forms of listener panel. The first is designed to elicit specific comments from members, present or potential, of the audience for whom any given program is intended. The second is designed to provide "expert" opinion on the likely effects of a given program on its "target" audience, such expert opinion usually provided by those who are not presently citizens of countries to which the broadcasts are directed (scholars, émigrés, foreign service officers), but who have a relatively sophisticated knowledge of those countries.

The usual manner of assembling panels for the first of the two forms is to analyze listener mail and select from it those listeners who indicate that they listen to a given station fairly often, then to contact these listeners and ask them whether they would cooperate with the station by providing comments on programs (sometimes specified, sometimes not) broadcast by the station. If the listener agrees

to do this, he or she is usually provided with a form which asks several specific questions related to quality of reception, pace of delivery, comprehensibility of language, friendliness and/or authoritativeness of the announcer or narrator, and a general question inviting random reactions. Obviously, such a system demands a good deal of cooperation on the part of the listener, and is very likely to result in the exclusion of less well-educated, poorer, or extremely busy listeners. Nevertheless, it can provide much valuable information on the very basic matter of listener comprehension and "involvement" as related to specific programs and talent. Only the BBC uses such a method at present, and then almost entirely for European audiences; other broadcast operations, particularly Radio Australia, have considered it, but have not implemented it.[22]

A variation on this method was attempted by the Voice of America in December, 1960. Drawing on mail received in the course of a previous World wide English Service Transistor Radio Contest, VOA culled out those listeners who reported that they had heard the contest announced over either the Music USA (largely popular music and jazz) program or over a program in the Forum (talks about specialized

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[22]From what the author could learn in the course of his field trip in 1970, most international stations doubted that Asian audiences could be depended upon to cooperate with such projects, once listeners discovered that there was a certain amount of work involved and that this would require a good deal of self-motivation. Because of this, it was felt that replies would be limited to those members of the audience who were already favorably disposed toward the station. Whether this would be truer of Asia than of Europe none of them was prepared to say. It is the author's feeling that answers to questions related to comprehensibility would have a substantial degree of validity and usefulness nomatter how skewed the sample.

fields) series. These listeners were then contacted and asked to fill out a two-page questionnaire regarding such matters as frequency of listening, schedule preferences, and, for Forum listeners, comprehensibility. The cooperation rate was quite gratifying; well over 30 per cent of the Forum listeners contacted in Asia returned their questionnaires, while the figure for Music USA listeners in Asia was just under 30 per cent. These rates of return compared favorably with figures for other areas of the world.

As might be expected given the manner of drawing the sample, the majority of listeners reported listening to Forum or to Music USA quite often; three times a week or more to the daily Music USA, three times a month or more to the less frequently broadcast Forum series. Asian listeners who responded to the question regarding the comprehensibility of Forum lectures and talks claimed that these were "very easy" (about 30 per cent) or "fairly easy" (about 55 per cent) to follow; the remainder found them "fairly difficult" (about 6 per cent) or "very difficult" (less than 2 per cent) to follow, or simply didn't respond to this question (just under 10 per cent). Without any "follow-up" questions on this point, there is no means of determining the validity of these responses. A number of listeners may have assumed that they understood the essence of the broadcast, but whether their understanding and the VOA's basic "message" coincided is another matter; a number of listeners may also have felt that they would be expected to understand the broadcasts, and therefore indicated little or no difficulty in doing so, despite what problems may have actually

occurred. Since the Asian response to the question of comprehensibility coincides with the response from other regions of the world, however, it is likely that the validity of the Asian response is no greater nor less than the European, African and Near East responses.[23]

Yet another variation on the first form of the listener panel is the occasional attempt by an international radio operation to enlist the cooperation of its nation's embassies or information services overseas in the establishment of specialized listener panels, usually drawn from among the populace of the particular city where the embassy or information service is located.[24] In nations where sensitivities to "foreign interference" run high, there is a decided disadvantage to this method, but it does offer the rather considerable advantage of allowing for in-depth response, as well as questions designed to clarify the respondent's feelings and to interpret his uses of certain terms of reference. The method is expensive and time-consuming, and

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[23] U.S. Information Agency, Mail Survey of Listeners to Music USA. Washington: U.S.I.A., Media Brief No. 6, April, 1961.
U.S. Information Agency, Mail Survey of Listeners to Forum on the Voice of America. Washington: U.S.I.A., Media Brief No. 9, May, 1961.

[24] Such a panel could be assembled by a survey research organization in the country, which would have the advantage of not exhibiting any overt connection with the "nation of origin" of the broadcast(s). The author is under the impression that such research has occasionally been done for the Voice of America and the BBC, but has never seen a report on such research.

has apparently been little used, in Asia or elsewhere.[25]

The second form of listener panel--the "outside expert"--is rather simpler to use than the first, and shares most of the basic technical advantages of this method. It is particularly useful in cases where none of the more standard methods (listener mail, survey research) is feasible, as is the case with North Korea, North Vietnam, the People's Republic of China,[26] or the USSR. Both the BBC and the Voice of America have established such panels at one time or another over the past decade, generally to analyze broadcasts destined for China or the Soviet Union. The panels have usually consisted of university professors who have visited these countries and who know their languages and customs well, but who can detach themselves from their own governments' policy considerations. Their major advantage

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[25] The author helped to conduct such an analysis of audience response in 1962, when he was with the U.S. Information Service in Tunis, Tunisia. The Voice of America sent a "pilot" version of a dramatic documentary called "Birthright" to many USIS posts around the world, of which USIS Tunis was one. We were asked to assemble a panel of "likely" listeners tosuch a program and to elicit their reactions as to comprehensibility, "palatability" of the central and supporting concepts, etc. The author prepared a four-page report on the apparent conclusions of the panel, many of which were quite specific and potentially very helpful. He subsequently learned that very few USIS posts bothered to set up panels ("too much work for too little reward," "would compromise our position here, since such activities are looked upon as undue meddling in citizens' affairs"), and even fewer to provide detailed reports. In other words, there was no means of compelling cooperation, and a few posts saw fit, for good reasons or bad, to provide it.

[26] Listener mail from the People's Republic of China to the Voice of America, Radio Australia and the BBC, amounts to ten letters a year or less; Radio Japan has received an average of a dozen letters a year over the last three years; the Voice of Free China, even with its "radio bombardment" of the mainland, receives less than two hundred letters a year from mainland listeners. Mail from North Korea and North Vietnam is almost non-existent. Much of this situation is presumably due to heavy censorship of the mails by the governments concerned.

appears to lie in the intense consideration of semantics, rather than of overall policy matters, that usually takes place as their members deliberate.[27] The assembling of such a panel takes considerable time and money, so that, once it has been convened, it is usually asked to evaluate a wide range of programs and to prepare a highly detailed report, which will then serve as the basis for a major review of the station's programing policies with respect to a particular nation. Since it is not particularly efficient to conduct such major reviews very often, such panels have been infrequent.

A more informal type of expert panel review comes about internally. Most international broadcasting organizations make it a practice to regularly review programing, and to do so by means of panels of their own employees, among which will usually be found some who have been directly involved in producing the broadcasts, others who have not, some who have lived in the country for which the broadcast is intended, either as former citizens or as foreign service officers, others who have never been outside their own country. Their collective expertise thus qualifies them to deal with both production and policy matters, even if they may lack the detachment of a panel of "outside" experts or the up-to-date, intimate knowledge of listener psychology that may characterize the other forms of listener panels.

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[27] The author has discussed the "expert panel" method with a colleague who served on a VOA Russian language broadcast panel in 1961, and has seen a report on the panel's conclusions, many of which deal with semantic problems: use of "loaded" language, vagueness of certain terms or examples, etc.

Knowing the Audience - Summary and Recommendations

International broadcasters have invested considerable time, money and effort in attempts to discover who listens. Their efforts have been partially successful, in that analysis of listener mail and survey research have provided a fairly clear profile of the audience: predominantly young (15-34), quite well-educated, urban, male (but with a fair proportion of female students),fairly affluent, often in "decision-making" or high-prestige occupations and positions.[28] Significant deviations from this profile appear to have come about when a given international station has been clearly audible over the predominant domestic broadcast band (whether it be short wave or medium wave), as is the case with the Voice of America in Korea, the BBC in several Asian nations, and Radio Australia in Indonesia. If listener mail from Asia is compared with listener mail from other parts of the world, and if overall population figures are taken into account, the Asian audience for several international stations (BBC, VOA, Radio Moscow) is somewhat smaller than other areas of the world. Certain stations, however, (Radio Australia, Radio Japan, Far East Broadcasting Company, Voice of Free China), draw the overwhelming majority of their listener mail from Asia.

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[28]Certain studies made by the Voice of America in the 1961-63 Asian Survey dealt with the categorical analysis of listener response as compared with a categorical analysis of the national population in general. This was done with respect to age for Cambodia, Laos and Indonesia, and revealed that listener response from those in the 15-34 year old group was about 50 per cent greater than the national average for this age group. A similar analysis of contest occupation as compared with national occupational averages in Korea revealed that students, for example, comprised 27 per cent of the contest sample,

Far less is known about how often, to what and why people listen to international services, and even less about how much listeners comprehend ~~of~~ or accept of what they hear.[29] Semantics is a similar "riddle,"[30] although listener panel reports, if they were publicly available, would perhaps dispel this riddle to some degree.

Several other important questions remain unanswered by present research. For example, there are probably certain "important" (numerically and/or in terms of the influence they wield) listeners who re-

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while accounting for only 4 per cent of the national average; that white-collar workers comprised 10 per cent of the contest sample, but only 1 per cent of the national average; that housewives comprised 2 per cent of the sample but 37 per cent of the national average.

[29] Listener comprehension is a little-understood area for domestic broadcasting as well. Within the last few years, RAI (Italy) has begun to examine its domestic news broadcasts in this respect, and has reportedly concluded that a substantial portion of an average newscast is not understood by the average listener. The BBC External Service is supposedly ready to conduct some listener comprehension tests, using foreign students studying in London as subjects. (Information obtained in May, 1970 interview with Asher Lee, Director of Audience Research, BBC External Service, London.)

[30] Most international broadcasting organizations claim to consider semantics frequently, but several--notably Radio Peking, the Voice of Free China, Radio Moscow, the Far East Broadcasting Company--appear to be prisoners of their own national or ideological rhetorics. Detailed examination of semantics (as opposed to "gut reaction") has been rare. A recent article by Szalay and Lysne illustrates a method for conducting such research, and, since their work was based on a student (both foreign and domestic) population, this would appear to be very applicable to international broadcasting, where students predominate as listeners. See Szalay, Lorand B. and Lysne, Dale A., "Attitude Research for Intercultural Communication and Interaction," Journal of Communication, Vol. 20, No. 2 (June, 1970), 180-200.

main largely undisclosed through present methods. Government officials, particularly higher in rank than the average civil servant, are known to listen, but only through sporadic reports of conversations between embassy officers and these officials or through cause-and-effect reasoning, e.g., a certain Minister is known to be a BBC listener. Last night the BBC broadcast a detailed explanation of yesterday's Cabinet decision to supply arms to South Africa. Later that same evening, the Minister, in the course of a conversation with a U.S. Embassy official, raised several of those same specific points covered by the BBC. It is doubtful that standard survey methods or listener mail analysis will ever disclose much about this particular audience, but foreign service officers could be trained to become more sensitive to eliciting and reporting this information.

Other questions would be easier to answer, and should in theory be important, as well. It is apparent that international radio audiences are quite young. How many of these young listeners continue to listen as they grow older, change occupations, take on family responsibilities? To what sorts of programs do they now listen? Has their listening led them to seek additional information about the nations from which these broadcasts come? Such matters could be raised in the form of a questionnaire addressed to past participants in contests (where listener age is always demanded), if a home, as opposed to temporary, address were also available. Rate of return would probably be fairly low (20 per cent, if mail return to VOA's Forum and Music USA projects is any guide), and it would reflect the prac-

tices of the most devoted listeners, but it would be a beginning.

A corollary question, and one that could be raised even more easily in the course of a contest, would ask listeners to disclose how they came to listen to a given international station in the first place--whether by "recommendations" of peers or teachers, through a broadcast schedule appearing in the newspaper, posted in a library or embassy reading room, simple curiosity, random dialing on the radio set, a newspaper or magazine article concerning the station, etc. Such information would give an international broadcast operation a more precise indication of how best to publicize itself in order to reach more listeners within certain audience groups.

Most international broadcasting organizations claim to be interested in research that would deal with these questions. For a few (Radio Moscow and the Voice of Free China), the author had the distinct impression that these possibilities had never been considered before they had been raised by him, but that they were considered as fascinating and worthwhile. There is never enough money for research, at least according to those staff members in international broadcasting organizations whose major concern lies in this area, and past research has been mildly disappointing in many instances. When a large-scale research study is commissioned, but reveals that only three to five per cent of the national population in another country listens to "your" broadcasts as often as once a week, it is difficult to point out to critics and skeptics of international broadcasting that this is a commendable figure when analyzed from the standpoint of how other international broad-

casters have fared in similar surveys and of how this figure breaks down to reveal an audience skewed heavily in the direction of those sub-groups of the population who are theoretically most subject to "foreign influence." All of this is difficult enough to explain, without adding the complications that might well come about with research designed to elicit information on comprehensibility of broadcasts or whether a former teen-ager still listens to one's broadcasts. There is also the possibility that staff members may either feel that they already know their audiences well enough or that, in order to preserve their own self-esteem, they would just as soon not know more about the situation. When research is honestly and competently conducted, there is always the possibility that it will show that staff members are operating under erroneous or dated assumptions.

Given the expense and the uncertain character of research in international broadcasting, it is not surprising that certain organizations do very little (Radio Moscow, VOFC, Radio Peking), that others largely confine themselves to one particular form of research (Radio Japan, Radio Australia), and that others have periodically cut back on expenditures for research projects (VOA, BBC). However, the sheer amounts of money spent on international broadcasting--annual budgets range from a few million for such organizations as Radio Australia and Radio Japan to tens of millions for the Voice of America and Radio Moscow--would seem to demand more precision regarding the potential effectiveness of those broadcasts. The precision would seem within reach, simply by expanding the quantity of present research and by

introducing certain new areas for investigation within the framework of present methods. It would also help if there were some degree of uniformity in asking the reporting at least certain questions and answers (e.g. age, occupation, stations listened to) and in employing and defining certain terms, but this is highly unlikely, given the basic competitive atmosphere that prevails in international broadcasting.[31] In sum, what we now have is a fascinating but woefully uneven and shallow picture of the international radio audience, particularly in terms of the extent to which the aforementioned "dominant international characteristics" of various nations with interests in Asia are being reinforced or dispelled, and it seems quite likely that this picture will acquire few new details in the foreseeable future.

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[31] BBC and VOA exchange research information regularly but do not use uniform reporting methods. VOA's reports often lack even internal uniformity, e.g., analyses of the 1961-63 transistor radio contest mail featured certain information for certain countries but not for others, and used differing categorical breakdowns for ages of contestants.